

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 AID-05 OPIC-03 CIAE-00

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FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6422

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD CH

SUBJECT: FALL-OFF IN TRADE ACTIVITY

1. A SURVEY OF TRADE OFFICIALS AT FOREIGN EMBASSIES IN PEKING INDICATES THAT THE SLOWDOWN IN SALES TO THE PRC. WE HAVE NOTED FOR U.S. FIRMS ALSO EXTENDS TO OTHER WESTERN TRADING PARTNERS, EVEN GERMANY AND ITALY WHICH HAD HAD A GOOD FIRST HALF-YEAR EARLIER. ALMOST NO MAJOR SALES TO THE PRC HAVE BEEN NEGOTIATED IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS. CHINESE TRADING CORPORATIONS ARE CONTINUING BUYING TRIPS ABROAD AND DISCUSSIONS IN PEKING, BUT EVEN ALLOWING FOR THE DISRUPTIVE EFFECTS OF THE EARTHQUAKE AND THE MAO MOURNING PERIOD, THE LEVEL OF PURCHASES HAS BEEN LOW.

2. NEVERTHELESS, THE CHINA COUNCIL FOR THE PROMOTION OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE (CCPIT) IS FORGING AHEAD WITH SEVERAL FOREIGN EXHIBITIONS. ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 18 AND POSTPONED BECAUSE OF THE MAO MOURNING PERIOD, THE SWEDISH TRANSPORTATION EXHIBITION WILL TAKE PLACE IN PEKING BEGINNING OCTOBER 12. THE JAPANESE ENVIRONMENTAL MACHINERY EXHIBITION, WHOSE SEPTEMBER 3 OPENING DATE HAD BEEN POSTPONED AS A RESULT OF THE EARTHQUAKE, WILL BE HELD IN PEKING FROM OCTOBER 5 TO 18. ORDERS RESULTING FROM THESE

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SHOWS SHOULD BE A USEFUL CLUE TO THE STATE OF THE

CHINESE MARKET FOR THE REMAINDER OF 1976.

3. CHINESE EXPORTERS HAVE REMAINED RELATIVELY ACTIVE. THE CHINESE INDUSTRIAL EXPOSITION, TO BE HELD JOINTLY BY SEVERAL TRADING CORPORATIONS IN MANILA DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF OCTOBER, WILL BE OPENED BY CCPIT VICE CHAIRMAN LI CHU'UAN. LI HAS ALREADY DEPARTED PEKING FOR MANILA, EXPLAINING TO THE PHILIPPINE EMBASSY THAT HE WAS GOING TO DO "LABOR" DURING THE SETTING UP OF THE EXPOSITION.

4. WHILE A GOOD NUMBER OF U.S. IMPORTERS ARE IN PEKING NOW, BUSINESS ACTIVITY SO FAR HAS BEEN GREATLY HINDERED BY THE FUNERAL OBSERVANCES. THE MOURNING PERIOD IS NOW CONCLUDED, BUT TRADING CORPORATIONS HAVE REFUSED TO MAKE AFTERNOON APPOINTMENTS FOR THIS WEEK, SAYING THAT THE TIME WAS NEEDED FOR POLITICAL STUDY SESSIONS. IN VIEW OF THE ABNORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES, THE FIRST RELIABLE CLUES TO CURRENT CHINESE EXPORT POLICY MAY HAVE TO AWAIT THE CANTON FAIR.

GATES

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